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INTELLIGENCE REPORT

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COUNTRY China

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DATE:

144544

SUBJECT General Conditions in Alashan District,
Ninghsia Province

DIST. 1 January 1948

PAGES 3

SUPPLEMENT

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1. Ninghsia City (106-19, 38-26) is 20 km west of the Yellow River. Extending from the Yellow River west to the city and for 10 km further, there are canals for irrigation, some of them dating back to the Han dynasty. East of the Yellow River opposite Ninghsia is the Ordos Region of barren mountains and dry steppe which covers most of the area inside the great bend of the Yellow River.
2. The motor road from Ninghsia to Tingyuanying (105-36, 38-48) is very poor, especially up to Wangyehfu [?]. This road cuts through the Alashan (mountains) south of Pinchuehpu [?] and emerges on the west side of the Alashan at Changliushui (106-45, 38-34). At Sankuan (105-54, 38-22), just outside the Great Wall, are the inspection stations of the Alashan Mongol Banner Government and the Ninghsia Provincial Government. Going north from Sankuan the road passes Chaopa [?] (also called Kungyehfu) which is a village of several mud houses, and finally reaches Tingyuanying which lies on the south slope of a small plateau about 15 km west of the Alashan range. The distance from Ninghsia to Tingyuanying is about 115 km, with Sankuan halfway.
3. On the east and west sides of the Alashan range there are gradually declining slopes extending 10 km, covered with washed-out boulders and stone gravel. The western slope of the Alashan range is wooded with fir and elm trees. West of the Alashan is a strip of grass steppe and then an area of grass partly covered by sand dunes. In this area, called the "Shamo", live most of the Mongols either in felt tents (yurts) or in Chinese-style mudhouses. The Mongol men seem to have little to do except to tend flocks and sometimes to care for a small vegetable garden. All men are said to have served in the army six months per year.
4. Tingyuanying is the largest capital of the few remaining Mongol princes. It was built about 200 years ago. The population numbers about 3,000 of which 2,000 are Mongols, mostly officials, soldiers and lamas. The remaining 6,000 are Chinese, mostly traders. Tingyuanying is a square walled city containing the palace of Prince Fah, government buildings, a lama temple and residences of the officials. Most of the Chinese live outside this wall. All houses are in common Chinese style. The Mongols outside the city live mostly on sour milk, mutton, milkcheese, butter, and rice or flour imported from the Chinese districts. Nearly all the Mongols can speak Chinese. Soldiers are dressed in Chinese uniform and civilians in gowns similar to Chinese ones.

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5. Prince Tah, a Mongol, is closely related to the former Manchu emperors of China. The present wife of Prince Tah is the sister of the last Manchu ruler, Henry P'u Yi of Manchuria. The Prince is about 40 years of age, has a modern Chinese education (graduate of Peita University, Peiping) but has only a moderate command of the Mongol language. His Chinese is fluent. He speaks no English. Prince Tah dresses either in the uniform of a Chinese Lt. General or in foreign clothes. Soldiers address him as "Commander" (Tah Sau Ling) and civilians as "Prince Tah" (Tah Wang Yeh). The views which he expresses are very democratic and he acts more like a modern Chinese official than a Mongol prince of the blood. He lives in a modern bungalow-style house which he built himself two years ago. He built an ambitious garden around the house along the lines of the Peiping Pei Hai (Winter Palace) though on a tiny scale.
6. The Prince appears to be very capable and makes a good impression. His government is guided by a vice Governor (Hsien Li), a Mr. Lo, a relative of Prince Tah, and consists of 4 bureaus (Ch'u) similar to other modern Chinese Provincial Governments. The Prince's private secretary is a Mr. Li (graduate of Fu Jen University, Peiping), who is a young Chinese official formerly with the Kansu Provincial Government.
7. During the war Prince Tah had to live in Lanchow under the so-called protection of the Central Government of China and for practical purposes he is but a puppet for the Chinese. His position as ruler of a Mongol tribe in a strategic area situated among Mohammedans, Chinese and other Mongols, is very difficult. His relations with the Mohammedan Governor of Ninghsia, Ma Xung-kwei, are not of the best, and the Central Government officials in Lanchow are traditionally suspicious of Mongols. The Central Government authorities now show an increased interest in the Mongols for political and military reasons, but do not go so far as to deliver any arms or funds to the Mongols beyond a bare minimum.
8. The population of the Alashan District (Alashan Banner) numbers only 120,000 but the territory is enormous covering the greater part of Ninghsia Province extending to the Outer Mongolian border, Kansu Province and Suiyuan Province.
9. Commercial traffic between Tingyuanying and Ninghsia city is greatly restricted. It consists of imports from Ninghsia of foodstuffs and cloth for exports of furs and wool. Official connections (political and military) exist mostly with Lanchow. Most of the exports go by caravan to Paotou. The Mongols barter sheep and camel wool for foodstuff and cloth. In Tingyuanying approximately 300,000 catties of camel wool and one to two million catties of sheepwool are available yearly. Chinese traders bring flour, cloth, some sugar and bricktea. Altogether there are some 200 firms, large and small, in the Alashan District, including individual traders who go into the "Shamo" area to trade for wool. No trade of any description can be done without the approval of the Banner Government, and there is only one kind of tax. The export of wool is not restricted and can now be sent to Paotou by caravan for \$200,000 (Chinese National Currency) per 120 catties. Raw camel's wool is said to cost about half the Tientsin price. In Tingyuanying there is a post office and telegraph facilities over which the dealers obtain latest prices from Tientsin. The nearest banks are in Ninghsia and the remittance fee from Tientsin varies from 2 per cent to 5 per cent.
10. All land in the Alashan District is the property of Prince Tah and is rented by his government to people who want to build or cultivate. There is a mission property at Sanshengkung ⁷ which also belongs to the Alashan District. The mission pays a yearly rent of 300 tons of cereal plus other presents to the Prince.
11. There is a modern primary school in Tingyuanying and a Mongol middle school was under construction to be completed in November 1947. There is also a middle school supported by the Chinese Government where Mongolian is taught in addition to Chinese. The portrait of Genghis Khan is prominently displayed in these schools.
12. While there is no communication at present between Inner and Outer Mongolia, there is a possibility that the Russians are using propaganda to bring Inner Mongolia into the Outer Mongolian sphere by developing the familiar "one race, one country" line. Any such attempt in Inner Mongolia will be strongly opposed by the princes and lamas of Inner Mongolia because it is inimical to their survival.

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13. Peissu (North Temple), 40 km north of Tingyuanqing in the Alashan, consists of a large group of buildings and temples including a few small houses belonging to Chinese traders. At Peissu there are about 300 lamas and three living Buddhas, one of whom is a shy young Tibetan boy of fifteen. His name cannot be spoken in the presence of other less important lamas. There is a similar temple, Nanssu (South Temple), 40 km south of Tingyuanqing.
14. Three women recently arrived from Sweden to reopen the Swedish Pentecost Mission in Tingyuanqing which has been vacant since 1943. These missionaries are well liked, but they have no converts among the Mongols; the only converts are among the Chinese. This mission has no school. In general the Mongols are conservative and suspicious, but trustworthy. The returning missionaries found nothing missing from the mission. There are few bandits or robbers in Ninghsia. Strict measures are enforced against them.
15. The Mongols need modern instruction in veterinary medicine. The modern-minded men among the government officials would welcome outside help in this and other fields. Such work would have to be undertaken in the mission spirit, however, as no profit could be made from it. Also any such undertaking would require initial approval of the Banner Government, without which not even a camel can be hired in the Alashan District. The most dangerous disease for camels is a kind of diarrhea which is highly contagious and usually results in death. The Mongols apparently have no cure for it.
16. Alashan is said to contain iron, good smokeless coal, salt and saltpeter. Rare medical herbs are found on the steppes.

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